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NSC BRIEFING

28 September 1955

FRENCH NORTH AFRICA

- I. Faure's failure meet 12 Sep deadline for solution to Moroccan impasse, together with subsequent French vacillations, have increased danger of further violence. At same time, political tensions generating in metropolitan France threaten disintegration of Faure's coalition and fall of govt.
  - A. Steps in Faure's Morocco program (in Aix agreement with Nationalists) included:
    1. "Withdrawal" of ben Arafa.
    2. Simultaneous establishment "Council of the Throne."
    3. Formation of all-Moroccan government, which would negotiate reorganization of Moroccan administration.
  - B. However, program stymied at "first step," since Arafa still refusing quit Throne.
  - C. Native Moroccan support for stubborn sultan is mere handful--most notably El Glaoui (pasha of Marrakech), Sherif el Kettani (head of minor religious brotherhood) and Arafa's chief of protocol, Abderrahman Hajoui.
    1. Recent loyalty pledges (only 50 out of 223 tribal rulers) probably staged by palace entourage.
- II. Sultan's most significant support is coming from French rightists--Jain-Koenig-LeConte-Montel group.
  - A. Also supported by reactionary settler's organization--"Presence Francaise"--claiming to represent majority of 400,000 French in Morocco.

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B. Faure's failure to provide explicit directions to Resident General Boyer de Latour, whose sympathies rest with the "Presence Francaise"-Jain clique, also delaying "first step".

III. Both the Moroccan Nationalists (at Aix conference) and Ex-sultan ben Youssef (from exile in Madagascar) have shown remarkably conciliatory attitude toward French.

A. However, French delays are weakening position of moderates.

B. Nationalist leaders know their supporters in Morocco fretting under moderate policies, fear that extremists may capture nationalist organization.

1. Extremist-called strikes already beginning in major Moroccan cities.

C. Meanwhile, French in Morocco attempting to discredit principal nationalist party, Istiqlal:

1. Residency official has blamed party's "insincerity, inconsistency" for present impasse.

2. Stated French must now impose undefined reform program, leave Arafat on throne.

D. Another Residency official (25 Sep) said French now ready for "showdown" with nationalists, continued that France does not mind stripping European defenses, since danger of war with USSR now negligible.

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1. Official affirmed that French reprisals for 20 Aug Oued-Zen massacre totalled 5,000 members of guilty Berber tribes, hoped this would serve as warning to other tribes.
- IV. In all North Africa, now, French Army forces total some 220,000--up 50% from a year ago. More than half are Metropolitan forces, 34% are black Africans: 34% are North African.
- A. Force includes 4 NATO-committed Divisions, plus battalions from other such Divisions to a total of 50% of France's NATO-committed Army personnel.
- B. Much of the French Army's equipment is US-supplied. Although heavy equipment remains in France, lighter materiel has accompanied North African reinforcements and in one "accidental" case, trucks have arrived in Morocco still bearing US markings.
- V. In Algeria, meanwhile, reinforced French formations are busy mopping up the rebels' "Army of God" and the state of emergency, previously confined to the Department of Constantine and to western Oran, has been extended to the entire area.
- A. The latest political crisis in Algeria arose Monday, the day before an extraordinary session of the Algerian Assembly was to meet, when 42 (out of 60) Moslem members threatened to boycott the session.

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B. The Moslem delegates rejected French reform proposals as "too little too late", demanded an end to the repression program and endorsed the concept of an autonomous Algeria, "federated" with France.

1. The Governor General cancelled the Assembly session.

VI. Meanwhile, in Paris, Faure's position is considerably more precarious than was case in July, in light convening National Assembly 4 Oct.

A. North Africa trouble, together with domestic French labor unrest, may counterbalance general Assembly reluctance to overthrow him before national elections (spring 1956).

B. However, no Assembly discussion of govt's policy likely before mid-October (reorganization of Assembly's administration is first order of business).

C. Faure and Pinay visit to Moscow (scheduled 14 October), plus Geneva talks (starting 24 October), will also be strong deterrents to attempt to unseat Faure during initial weeks of Assembly session.

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